SPEECH

OF

SENATOR CHASE,

DELIVERED AT TOLEDO, MAY 19, 1854, BEFORE A MASS CONVENTION OF THE DEMOCRACY OF NORTH-WESTERN OHIO.

I appear before you, fellow-citizens, in compliance with an invitation from the Democrats of Lucas county, to state my views upon the great questions which agitate the country at this time. I am glad to have an opportunity of expressing my views in the presence of the Democracy of Northwestern Ohio. There is a witness in containing the moral battle for Freedom in the vicinity of the closing scenes of our fathers' struggle for independence. It was in this vicinity that the gallant Wayne encountered and overthrew the savage foe who was marshalled by British arts and influence to prolong, in the Western wilderness, that contest which the treaty of 1783 had terminated upon the Atlantic shore. His brilliant and rapid charges roused and drove the savage foe from the "Fallen Timber" which they made their covert. Let us, too, see if we cannot rouse and drive the enemies of Freedom from their coverts of compromise.

Some two years since I was elected a Senator of Ohio in the Congress of the United States. I was elected by the votes of Democrats who confined in the great cardinal doctrines of the Democratic faith: though they differed among themselves as to the practical application of those doctrines to certain questions of public concern. I was elected as a Democrat, recognizing and well known to recognize the duty of carrying out Democratic principles in their practical application to every subject of legislation. Everybody who knew anything about me knew that I was as likely to except slavery from the universal and impartial application of these principles.

With these views and with these ideas of public duty, I took my seat in the Senate. I have not swerved from my principles. I have gone straight on where Democratic principles required me to go, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left hand, no matter who was pleased or who was displeased.

It is well known that, when I took my seat, the whole country was agitated about the slavery extension question, and especially in regard to the legislative prohibition of slavery in the territories. We had acquired a vast accession to our national domain under the treaty with Mexico, stretching through 10° of latitude, and 24° of longitude.—This territory came to us free—as free as Ohio, Indiana or Illinois—from the curse of slavery.—The people, and you as a part of the people, indicated your will, through the votes of your representatives in Congress, that this territory, made free by Mexican law, should remain free under American law. If principle had not required my concurrence in this purpose, I should have felt myself bound to vote for the prohibition of territorial slavery, as a faithful representative of the almost universal sentiment of the people of Ohio.

But it was not easy to effect the object which you and I desired to accomplish. Gentlemen of the South claimed the right to carry slaves into the territories under the protection and safe-guard of National law. They claimed this right as one guarantied to them by the Constitution. Its existence was denied by the representatives of the free States. Hence a protracted contest arose, which was raging when I entered Congress.

Meanwhile California, peopled by a vast and sudden emigration—allured by her golden treasures—had organized her State government, and presented her application for admission into the Union. She was met, at the threshold, by fierce denunciations of the action of her people, and by the open declaration that her claims should be contested, even at the hazard of dissolving the Union. This was a strange and unwonted spectacle. Hitherto, since the admission of Missouri, every State, applying for admission to the Union, had been received without question, as to the character of her institutions. Now the admission of California was contested with a violence and pertinacity almost without parallel, because she had ventured to prohibit the introduction of slavery where slavery had never existed. The threats of dissolution, uttered by Southern gentlemen, did not alarm me. They seemed to me alike vain and impotent. I thought then, and I think now, that the duty of Congress, in relation to the admission of California, was plain and sim-

ple. She ought to have been admitted without hesitation, without delay, and without conditions. In my judgment there was no danger that the threats of dissolution would be carried into effect. If I had even regarded the danger as *real*, rather than *imaginary*, I still would not submit to be controlled in legislative action, by menace of whatever character. But it was thought expedient—I wish I could impress upon this audience how thoroughly I detest that word *expedient*—to link the question of admission of California with that series of measures constituting what was well known as "the Compromise" or "Omnibus Bill." There was a clear majority in the House and in the Senate in favor of the admission of California. But instead of admitting her at once and alone, she was put into the Omnibus and kept traveling month after month, until that concern broke down, and California was turned out, leaving Utah in sole possession of the vehicle.—Thus Utah—which needed no legislative action—where the Mormons had already organized a government quite as good, and indeed rather better than any which Congress was likely to organise for them—was preferred, in the regards of Congress, to California. It was not until after the territorial government of Utah had been organized upon principles acceptable to the Senators from the slave States, that California received the permission of the Senate to come into the Union.

I ask your especial observation of *one* feature in this plan of territorial government. You will remember that a majority of the House of Representatives had been elected for the express purpose of prohibiting slavery in the territories.—One half at least of the Senators had been instructed to vote for this prohibition. A Vice President, recommended to the suffrages of the people of the free States, upon the ground of his known opposition to the extension of slavery, was the presiding officer of the Senate, and held, in case of an equal division, the casting vote.

Under these circumstances it might have been well expected that the clause of the Ordinance of '87, prohibiting territorial slavery, would have been engrafted upon any bill for the government of the territory without hesitation. But not only was no prohibition of slavery engrafted upon the bill for the government of Utah, but on the contrary, a clause was inserted, requiring any future Congress to admit into the Union any State created out of that territory with slavery, if the people of the applying State should desire it. This clause was doubtless intended as an implied recognition of the lawfulness of slaveholding prior to the erection of a State government; for why should there be a provision for the erection of a slaveholding State out of a non-slaveholding territory? Thus was the will of a vast majority of the American people disregarded, set aside, held for naught by their representatives in Congress.—The same provision in relation to the erection of States with slavery was inserted in a bill to provide for a territorial government for New Mexico. This was called the *settlement* of the territorial slavery question!

Next in order were the questions relating to the boundary of Texas. Public opinion had been much divided in relation to her Western and North-western limits. The annexation resolutions left all questions of boundary to be adjusted by the government of the United States, through negotiations with Mexico. The Whig party had generally contended that the true Western boundary of Texas was the Nueces and a line drawn North from that river to the Red River. The Democratic party, on the other hand, had generally maintained the title of Texas to the territory between the Nueces and the Lower Rio Grande.—It was upon this ground that the attack of the Mexican forces upon the American troops on the eastern bank of the Rio Grande, was resented and repelled as an invasion of American soil. But no Northern Statesman admitted the right of Texas to any territory whatever west of her ancient limits as a Spanish province, and above the Lower Rio Grande; while many Whig statesmen of the South denied her title to any territory whatever west of the Nueces. The Nueces is a short river, some 300 miles in length; while the Rio Grande having its course in its lower portion some 150 miles west of the Nueces, extends from the Gulf some 2000 miles to its sources in the Northern Mountains of New Mexico. This territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, part of the original Mexican State of Tamaulipas, was that which the Whigs denied and the Democrats affirmed to belong to Texas. Not a foot above—not a foot of all that was, before the treaty of cession, Coahuila, Chihuahua, and New Mexico, belonged to Texas. All this territory, upon the treaty of cession, became the territory of the United States, precisely in the same sense and to the same extent that the region northwest of the Ohio became the territory of the Union, upon the cession by Virginia of her claim to it.

Texas, nevertheless, boldly asserted her pretensions. She even talked of going to war with the General Government in vindication of her claim. To be sure her Representatives at Washington were asking the interposition of the same General Government to protect her from Indian hostilities. And it seemed hardly natural that she should fight her protector. War, too, requires munitions; and to provide them there must be treasure. The resources of Texas had been exhausted in her contest for independence. She could not pay her debts, at least she did not, and her creditors were urging the government of the United States to assume and pay her obligations. Without an army, without resources, without credit, Texas was about, we were told, to make war upon the United States, if Congress would not concede her claims. She was going to raise and march an army hundreds of miles through a wilderness, inhabited by those tribes against which she asked the protection of the Government, and storm the garrisons of the United States in New Mexico! I confess I was not much alarmed by

these demonstrations. But other gentlemen thought them sufficiently serious to make large concessions expedient. Congress finally agreed to pay Texas ten millions of dollars and cede to her a greater portion of the territory to which, as I have already shown, she had no title, if she would consent to yield her claim to the residue, and relieve us from the terrors of invasion!

The government of this Union certainly ought to exercise great liberality in the adjustment of conflicting claims with individual States appealing to its honor and justice. But nothing should be yielded to menace:—nothing to demands at the point of the bayonet.

But another reason had much influence upon my vote against this Ten Millions bill. Years ago the Democracy entered their solemn protest against National Assumption of State debts. It might have been convenient to the people of Ohio to have shifted the burden of her debt upon the General Government. It might have been convenient for Illinois, deeply involved, even to the point of suspending payment, to have repaired her credit by the aid of the National Treasury.—And so of the other States. But the Democracy of the Nation sternly refused the smallest countenance to the idea of assumption. Each State was left to manage its own indebtedness in its own way. But the Ten Millions bill provided for the assumption of five millions of the Texan debt in addition to the payment of five millions and the surrender of a vast territory as the price of peace.

Fellow-citizens, I desired for the United States not a single square inch of land justly belonging to Texas. No question of slavery would influence me at all in the settlement of a question of *boundary*. A court might as well make the *character* of litigants an element in the determination of a question of title. Let Texas have her land; let her have it all. I only desired to have the matters in dispute settled upon some *principle*. I was quite willing to have them determined by the award of impartial arbitrators or commissioners. I voted for a proposition of that sort. I voted also for a proposition to refer the subject of dispute to the decision of the Supreme Court. I certainly thought that considering the composition of that Court, five Judges out of nine being from Slave States, Texas, at least, could not object to this reference. But she declined the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. She refused an adjustment by Commissioners. She insisted on money and land. I thought her claims unfounded, and voted against the bill which allowed them. I regarded it as a measure wrong in principle, dangerous as a precedent, and wholly inconsistent with Democratic doctrines.

The Fugitive Slave Bill was another of these measures of compromise. Permit me to call your attention to a brief historical account of the constitutional provision in relation to fugitives from service. Soon after the Convention of Framers assembled in 1787, four drafts of a constitution, or plan of government, were submitted to it; the Virginia plan, by Mr. Randolph; the New Jersey plan, by Mr. Patterson; the South Carolina plan, by Mr. Pinckney; the New York plan, by Mr. Hamilton. It must be remembered that all these were then Slaveholding States: and it is remarkable enough that not one of these plans contained any allusion, however remote, to the subject of fugitives from service. So far is it from being true that a provision for the reclamation of fugitives was at all a leading object even with *Southern* gentlemen in that Convention. Indeed the idea of such a clause does not seem to have been entertained until a late period in the session of the Convention. When proposed it was adopted with a degree of unanimity which indicates an understanding based upon some concessions intended as equivalents for it. My own idea of the arrangement is this: The Congress of the Confederacy was sitting in New York, while the Constitutional Convention was sitting in Philadelphia. Several distinguished gentlemen were members at the same time of both bodies. Each, therefore, was likely to be well informed as to the transactions of the other. On the 13th of July Congress promulgated the Ordinance of 1787, prohibiting slavery in the territory Northwest of the Ohio, and providing for the erection of five free States within its limits. This Ordinance, adopted by a unanimous vote, was understood to secure a permanent majority of free States in the confederation. No one contemplated the permanent or even very long continued existence of slavery in any State. The Ordinance itself contained a provision for the reclamation of fugitives from service, limited to cases of escape from *original* States. Nor was this limitation accidental. The benefits of the provision, relating to the navigable waters leading to the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence, were expressly secured to the citizens not only of the *original* States, but of all States which might thereafter be added to the Confederacy. It was in consideration of the provision in the Ordinance, securing a permanent majority of free States, and of the general understanding that slavery was to have but a temporary existence in any State, that the provision to the reclamation of fugitive slaves was inserted in the Constitution. In effect the slave States said to the free States: We do not desire the permanence of slavery; we mean to get rid of it as soon as we can consistently with the best interests of all concerned. We give you a pledge of our sincerity by prohibiting slavery in all the territory now belonging to the nation, and by providing for the creation of five free States out of it. We ask you in return, not to interfere with slavery within our State limits, and to agree that you will pass no laws preventing our reclamation of escaping servants; but provide for their being delivered up on claim to the party to whom their services may be due. To this proposition the free States seem to have agreed.

The expectation prevalent at the time of the adoption of the Constitution and the Ordinance, that slavery would gradually and at no remote period wholly disappear, has not been realized,

stead of slavery restriction we have slavery extension: instead of diminution of slave population we have a vast increase; instead of reduction the number of slave States, it has been doubled. ns a permanence and extent of operation, not eamed of at the time, has been given to the fugitive slave clause incorporated into the Constitution.

The Congress of 1850 was required to legislate nder this provision for the extradition of fugitive aves. Was such legislation warranted by the onstitution? This is a grave question, not to be ettled by the mere assertion of any man, however eminent.

Our government is one of enumerated and specific powers. Among these, we find none to legislate upon slavery or fugitives from slavery. On e contrary, the whole matter of slavery seems have been carefully excluded from national legislation, and left to the disposal of the State sovereignties. States alone, in the view of the framers of the Constitution, could authorize, regulate abolish slavery, or provide for the extradition fugitive slaves. This view of the Constitution armonizes entirely with the settled doctrines of e Democracy, which deny to the General Government all power not expressly conferred, and scountenance the exercise of doubtful powers. y none has this doctrine of constitutional conruction been more strenuously insisted upon an by Southern statesmen. In utter disregard f it, they demanded from the Congress of 1850 e enactment of the Fugitive Slave law.

The provisions of this bill expose the impropriety of such legislation. The extradition of fugitive slaves cannot be effected by the General overnment except through its own officers. It annot engage the State authorities in this service. must provide, therefore, courts for the adjudicaon of questions arising upon claims to fugitive aves. The Fugitive Slave law has done this by uthorizing the Federal Circuit Courts to appoint ommissioners within their respective Circuits in afficient numbers to try all cases of this descripon. The Constitution expressly declares that udges shall be appointed by the President of the nited States, with the advice of the Senate, and old their offices during good behavior. These ommissioners are in every sense judges, yet they re appointed by the courts and hold their offices uring the pleasure of the courts, in utter disreard of the Constitution. Not only must there be udges to decide these fugitive cases, but there must be officers to carry their decisions into effect. Accordingly, the law authorizes the appointment f deputy marshals, without limit as to number, nd authorizes also each of these deputies to call o his assistance as many individuals as he sees it. Thus the country is filled with swarms of federal officers acting upon the most delicate questions of personal liberty and State Sovereignty, in manifest violation of the plain sense of the Constitution.

This act also denounces severe penalties against all who directly or indirectly transgress its provisions. Aiding or abetting in any way the escape of a fugitive, is a penal offence. If Congress can do this, Congress may also declare what acts shall constitute such aiding or abetting. Speaking, writing, publishing against slavery, may be said to tend to induce the escape of slaves; and may, therefore, be made penal offences by some new Fugitive Slave act. If the act of 1850 is constitutional, such an act would be constitutional. In comparison with such legislation, how harmless and insignificant were those Alien and Sedition laws which excited such indignation among the Fathers of Democracy in the days of Jefferson!

Fellow-citizens, I opposed the enactment of this law. I spoke against it; I voted against it. I shall never cease to demand its repeal. I trust that you will vote for no man to represent you in Congress who will not insist upon its repeal.

I know very well to what perils I expose myself by this declaration. My name will be of course enrolled on the list of the proscribed. The authors and supporters of the compromise measures, not content with carrying them through Congress, have entered into a solemn league and covenant against all who shall dare to question their wisdom, or contest their permanence. With an audacity and arrogance unparalleled in the legislative history of this country, they issued against all the opponents of these measures, their edict of exclusion from the offices and honors of the Republic. "They declare," they say, "that they will not support, for the office of President or Vice President, or of Senator or Representative in Congress, or as member of State Legislature"—why not add for constable, hog reeve or fence viewer?—"any man, of whatever party, who is not known to be opposed to the disturbance of the settlement aforesaid, and to the renewal, in any form, of agitation upon the subject of slavery."

Fellow-citizens, I am an independent man. Thus far in life I have earned my own living by my own labor. I have had but little assistance except from the head and hands that God gave me. I can live without office. I want no office upon the terms dictated by this league and covenant of proscription. In the position which I occupy, as one of the Senators of this great State, I shall act as my judgment and conscience prompt, never departing from the great landmarks of the Democratic faith: whoever may denounce, whoever may applaud.

But, fellow-citizens, if this covenant against agitation were fulfilled with any strictness, I know of none who would be more obnoxious to its penalties than the covenanters themselves: for since the day it was signed and sealed, who have been so busy in agitation as these denouncers of agitation? It is but a few days since the head of the Whig Administration, with the greater part of his Cabinet, traversed several States, everywhere proclaiming themselves and the supporters of the compromise measures as the exclusive friends of the Union, and denouncing all who dared to oppose them as disorganizers and revolutionists. A stranger to our institutions would be apt to inter

on the tenor of their speeches, that slavery was deed the corner-stone of the Republic, and that e main object of public care was to maintain nd uphold it. No agitation seems too violent—o denunciation too loud, if directed against the pponents of slavery. The supporters of the Fu- ive Slave law, and its kindred measures, are st so much opponents as *monopolists* of agitation. ow I am opposed to all monopolies. If there is be continued agitation upon this subject, I desire have some hand in it. If there is to be agita- on in support of the Fugitive Slave bill and the exan compromise, I desire to agitate a little gainst these measures, which my judgment and onscience alike condemn. And I mean to speak gainst them, and to warn the people against hem, on all suitable occasions, however high the uarter from which denunciations of such a course nay proceed.

It is claimed that these compromise measures were a settlement of the slavery question. This s mere mockery. Every man who has an eye to see, or an ear to hear, knows that the question is not settled. It is more unsettled than ever. The Fugitive Slave bill has thrown into the cauldron f controversy new elements, and applied to it fiercer flames. It degrades the State sovereign- ties: it makes every man's personal freedom in- secure: it sends its marshals and deputy marshals among us to seize any man who may be claimed as a fugitive from service. It clothes its irrespon- sible Commissioners with powers to enforce that claim without affording any adequate opportunity of defence to its victim. How idle, and worse than idle it is to tell us that the question is settled, when those who tell us so only mean it will be settled if a free people will acquiesce in the pro- visions of laws like this!

Doubtless, fellow-citizens, doubtless, this ques- tion of slavery must be settled. But to make any settlement, final and permanent, it must be foun- ded on principles just in themselves, and derived from the nature of Governments and States; not upon the imaginary equivalents of a bargain be- tween slavery and freedom. It must be effected, not by legislative amendments or additions to the constitution, but by adherence to its principles. In the view of the constitution, slavery is a mere State concern. It depends wholly upon State laws for its existence and continuance. By the consti- tution the General Government is forbidden to de- prive any "person of life, liberty or property, with- out due process of law." All power to authorize or sustain slavery, is thus carefully withheld from the National Government. These simple facts in- dicate the principles upon which a final and per- manent settlement can be effected. There must be no slavery without State limits and within ex- clusive national jurisdiction, and no legislation by Congress for the extradition of fugitives from ser- vice. Within State limits slavery must be left to the disposition of State legislation. When these simple and obvious principles shall be recognized and applied, the slavery question will be settled. The whole subject of slavery and the extradition of fugitives, will be left where the constitution left it—with the States. The General Government will maintain the natural rights of every person within its exclusive jurisdiction, and take charge only of those matters of general concern that the constitution has confided to its care. This, I re- peat, is, in my judgment, the only practicable set- tlement of the slavery question in conformity with the principles of the constitution.

There is, indeed, another mode of settlement which would also be final. I mean emancipation by the authority of the General Government, coupled with compensation to masters, and, per- haps, expatriation and colonization of the slaves. This would involve the assumption of undelega- ted power by Congress—the creation of an enor- mous national debt—the perpetuation of oppress- ive tariff and credit systems: and can, therefore, meet the approbation of no man to whom the principles of Democracy are dear.

The constitutional settlement to which I have adverted, would not, of course, secure the perma- nent continuance of slavery. On the contrary, its final extinction would be effected through State legislation as speedily as upon the other plan through national legislation. The plan of em- ancipation, compensation and colonization, will doubtless be the plan of Capital and Conservatism. The plan of restriction within State limits, and leaving the whole subject to State disposition, is the plan upon which our fathers intended that the final extinction of slavery should be accomplished. It is the plan of the Constitution and Democracy. Upon the former plan, the extinction of slavery will be indeed effected; but the labor of the coun- try will be burdened with an enormous debt, and suffer all the evils which tariff systems and bank- ing systems—the offspring of debt—bring in their train. Upon the latter plan, the same great object will be accomplished peacefully, constitutionally, by the voluntary action of the several States, without the imposition of any extra burdens upon labor.

It is vain to think of suppressing agitation until a final settlement shall be effected upon one or the other of these plans. It is God's will that all men shall be free. Man's will must conform to God's will. You may as well attempt to arrest Niagara as it thunders in its fall, as to attempt to arrest the current of opinion. You may as well attempt to arrest the sun as he ascends from the horizon to the zenith, as to arrest human progress to its destined consummation in equality and hap- piness incompatible with slavery.

The departure of the government from the prin- ciples of the constitution, in its action upon slav- ery, has given rise to great diversity of opinion in relation to the merits of slavery itself. There are those who once condemned the institution who now justify it on principle. These assert that States in which slavery exists enjoy the best form of society; that slavery is the happiest relation of labor to capital, and the most stable foundation of free institutions. I lately read an article in the *Southern Press*, the organ of the Southern Rights

Party in Washington, which stated that Jefferson and other statesmen of his day, did indeed indulge the expectation of the advent of a period when equality and justice, virtue and truth, should prevail among men. "But this bright dream," said the writer, "is no more." Is this indeed so? Is this the final result to which the political philosophy of slavery conducts us? Were our fathers visionary dreamers when they pledged their lives, their liberty and their sacred honor, to the vindication of equal rights and of the doctrine that governments are instituted among men to maintain and defend them? Did Washington indulge a dream—a bright dream which would vanish upon awaking—when he led our fathers to the battles of the revolution and fertilized so many fields with the blood of the martyrs of liberty? Were they—bleeding, fighting, dying for Independence,—the victims of hallucination—illusion—a dream? Upon you, men of Northwestern Ohio, it rests to vindicate their memory from this reproach.

There are others who recognize slavery as an evil, but regard it as a *necessary* evil—as a part of what they call the great system of servitude, to be mitigated as far as may be, without disturbance of any existing interests: but to be endured and tolerated rather than such disturbance. Such is the idea of Capital, of Money, of Conservatism. It will never grapple with the great evil with any resolute purpose of overcoming it.

There are others still, who yet maintain the opinions which Jefferson inculcated. They have a practical belief that all men were created equal; that they were endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that the security and defense of these rights are the sole, legitimate ends of human government; that it is the right and the duty of the people to form, reform and administer government for the attainment of these great ends; and that every man who has a vote is responsible for the action of the government which he helps to create and sustain. These hold, with Jefferson, that slavery is incompatible with the fundamental ideas of Liberty and Justice, and look to the time, and labor to *hasten* the time, when, by the legitimate action of the State and National governments, this great evil of slavery will be finally eradicated.

But we are met with the menace that if we act upon this subject the Union will be dissolved. This is an old cry and a very stale cry. It should alarm no sensible man. I have seen no symptoms of dissolution of the Union. I have heard angry debate; I have seen some bad blood in Congress; but, outside of Washington, I have seen no disposition among the people to effect or permit a dissolution of the Union. Is there anybody here who wants to dissolve it? Do you know of anybody anywhere who really wishes to dissolve it—perhaps I should say out of South Carolina? Fellow-citizens, when the dissolution of this Union comes, it will not be without observation. When *real* danger approaches you will feel it in the atmosphere. It will reveal its presence by signs in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. But how is it now? All peaceful, quiet, calm. The farmer drives his plow-a-field; the mechanic works in his shop; the merchant is busy at his counter and in his office the sailor plows the rivers, lakes and ocean all are engaged in their accustomed pursuits without agitation and without alarm. This would hardly be so were there real danger.

The truth is, this cry of dissolution of the Union has generally been used to effect some special object, and often with too much success. I will give you a brief account of the first instance I am aware of in our history. When the first Congress, the Congress of 1774, formed the non-importation and non-exportation agreement, by which they hoped to secure the co-operation of British merchants and manufacturers in the redress of American grievances, South Carolina threatened to withdraw from the Congress if she was not permitted to continue the exportation of rice and indigo. The great staples of the country were then breadstuffs and provisions. It was thought inadmissible while the Northern States agreed to discontinue the exportation of their grain and meats, that South Carolina should be allowed to export her rice and indigo. The delegates from South Carolina, except one, actually withdrew from Congress. The result was negotiation and a compromise. South Carolina was allowed to export rice, her great staple, and consented to forego the exportation of the unimportant article of indigo. This is a fair sample of the cry, its purpose and its result. In modern times it has had an additional result. It has been made an occasion for getting up a Union Party, an excuse for needless concessions to disaffection, and a ground of claim in behalf of compromise, to the plaudits of the people for their inestimable services in the salvation of a Union which was never in danger.

Did it ever occur to you, fellow-citizens, that according to the estimates of geographers, the whole earth contains but fifty millions of square miles of land, and that one-fifteenth of the whole is included within the boundaries of the United States! Did it ever occur to you that the law of gravitation restrains the orbit of every planet within the system to which it belongs; and that if some small *asteroid*, by some unwonted influence, is driven a little from its due course, the great law infallibly restores it to its true place? I have no fear that South Carolina will permanently disappear from the American Constellation. One of her own statesmen has said that she will find it easier to *get* out of the Union than to *get* out of it. But I do not believe that she will find it very easy to get out.

There are other matters, fellow-citizens, upon which I have been called to act during my service in the Senate. The public lands is one of these. By some the public lands are regarded as a fund to be distributed with a view to revenue. By others as a vast property to be divided between

ates and Corporations for various purposes of provement: By others, as an estate held in st for the people, to be partitioned among e people. I concur with those who hold the nion I have last mentioned. I voted for e bill granting lands to the soldiers of the ferent wars in which the country has been en-ged. I voted for it, not merely as an act of jus-e to the soldiers, but as a measure of distribu-g lands among the people. I was asked the her day if I did not think that there were classes individuals not included in the bill, equally en-led to its benefits. My answer was, Yes—a ry large class; the whole class of the landless. hen the Bounty Land bill was under discussion, prepared an amendment which I will read, and hich expresses my view of the subject. It was t thought by the friends of Land Reform expe-ent to press it at that time. But I trust it will t become a part of the law of the land.

[Mr. CHASE here read his amendment as fol-ws:]

"*Be it further enacted*, That every landless citi-n, and every immigrant who has made a decla-ation of intention to become a citizen of the Uni-d States, being of adult age, shall be entitled one hundred and sixty acres of land for actual ettlement, and every person, so entitled, having st made affidavit of intention to settle upon id land, shall receive from the Department of e Interior a certificate or warrant, reciting briefly the facts which constitute the title to said war-nt, and the warrantee may locate said warrant provided in the second section of this act, and eceive a patent, containing the same recital as e warrant therefor, and hold the same, so long he or she shall remain actually settled upon id land, exempt from execution or sale upon any ocess, order, or decree of any court of the Uni-d States."

It is my opinion also, that when, by any pro-ss of partition, or sale, or distribution, the quan-y of public lands in any State has been reduced low a million of acres, the Federal ownership of id within that State should be unconditionally minated by cession of the residue to the State. ccordingly prepared and brought in a bill for cession, to the State of Ohio, of all the remain-r of the public lands within our limits. I was tunate enough to obtain the concurrence of the mmittee on Public Lands in support of this bill. e action of the Senate upon it was prevented the near approach of the termination of the ssion. I hope yet to see it in the statute book.

The improvement of Rivers and Harbors en-ed, as you are aware, much of the attention of ngress at its last session, and was the occasion protracted and angry contest. I am opposed to ecessary and extravagant expenditures by vernment. The administration of public affairs ould be regulated by the strictest economy. I opposed also to sectionalism and favoritism. t I know that the power to regulate Com-erce is held by almost all the statesmen of the untry, of every party, to include the power to improve the Harbors and Channels of Commerce, and to provide for its security by the erection of light houses and other like means. So long as this construction is received I wish that the Commerce and Navigation of the West should share the benefits which the Government has hitherto so liberally extended to the Commerce and Navigation of the East. I favor no loose and latitudinarian construction of the Constitution; nor yet a construction so narrow and rigorous that it will deprive the Government of all power to accomplish the objects of its creation. Nor do I accept that other construction, sometimes liberal, and sometimes narrow, which is determined by degrees of latitude and longitude; and, like some products of the vegetable kingdom, expands towards the rising and closes towards the setting sun. In accordance with these views I gave a steady support to the River and Harbor Bill which passed the House and was defeated in the Senate. It contained indeed some provisions which seemed to me objectionable. But it was necessary to take the whole Bill or none, and I thought it more important to secure the appropriations for our extended Lake coast and River border than to defeat comparatively insignificant and unimportant appropriations for a *few* objects which should, perhaps, have been excluded from the Bill.

When the River and Harbor Bill was laid upon the table by the consent of a majority of its Whig friends, and it was apparent that it could never be taken up again, I thought it my duty to offer an amendment to the Civil and Diplomatic Bill embracing all the appropriations for Rivers and Harbors, which, in my judgment, should be properly included. This amendment embraced no appropriation not included in the defeated Bill. It was framed by simply striking from it those appropriations for which no recommendation or estimate had been furnished by the proper department, and which, upon that account, were strongly objected to by Western Democratic Senators. It included every important appropriation for the Rivers and Harbors of the West. This amendment was defeated, and defeated by the votes of professed friends and champions of River and Harbor improvements. I impute no motives; but I cannot but regard their action as singularly unfortunate.

I have thus, fellow citizens, briefly reviewed the most important questions upon which I have been called to act as your Senator.

In conclusion, permit me to say that the same principles which have governed my action heretofore will control it hereafter.

Whether in a public or in a private station,—and a *private* is to me not less acceptable than a *public* station,—I shall be found, God giving me strength, a maintainer of Freedom.

Whether supported or alone, I mean to stand, resolutely and inflexibly, by the great Democratic doctrine of equal and exact Justice to all men.

By the utmost efforts of humble abilities, I desire to promote the truest and highest interest of our whole country in all its breadth, and especial-

ly of that noble State in which your lot and my lot is cast.

I desire to see the National ownership of the Public Domain terminated within our limits.

I desire to hasten the time when every man who has a will to work shall have a spot to work upon, and a home to live in.

I desire to see those mighty inland seas which stretch along our Northern border, and the great Rivers which penetrate our vast Interior,—the like of which the world has not,—improved by the common treasury of the Nation, and made the safe channels of the Commerce and Navigation to a prosperous people.

I desire to see—God grant that we may live to see it—the hope of Jefferson and his compatriot statesmen not vanishing as a bright dream in the darkness of disappointment; but realized in the practical application of the principles of Freedom and Justice to the affairs of the State and National Governments; linking, in kindred bonds, and without a flaw, a great and virtuous people inhabiting from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Isthmus to the Pole: all free; every right defended; all labor justly rewarded, and not a man enslaved!

RESOLUTIONS of the Convention, reported by JAMES MYERS, JOHN FITCH, JOHN P. CRANKER, C. R. MILLER, and A. D. WRIGHT, Committee, and unanimously adopted.

1. *Resolved*, That the true mission of the American Democracy is to maintain the Liberties of the People, the Sovereignty of the States and the integrity of the Union, by the application to public affairs of its fundamental principles of Equal Rights, Exact Justice and no Special Privileges.

2. *Resolved*, That the Democracy of the Union has hitherto proved itself competent to its mission by the settlement of the various questions which have, from time to time, arisen in our history; especially when under the lead of JEFFERSON, it vindicated State Sovereignty and Popular Freedom, against the encroachments of the Central Power, and the odious Alien and Sedition Laws; and when, at a later period, under the lead of JACKSON, it defeated the dangerous schemes of Associated Wealth, and Privileged Monopoly by cancelling the National Debt, overthrowing the National Bank and substituting a Tariff for Revenue, instead of a Tariff for the promotion of particular interests.

3. *Resolved*, That the Democracy of the Union is fully competent to dispose of the question of Slavery and its relations to the State and National Governments, which, in the progress of events, has now arisen and demands, not an evasive and temporary adjustment, but a permanent and final settlement.

4. *Resolved*, That the Whig compromise of 1850, by making the admission of a Sovereign State contingent upon the adoption of other measures, demanded by the special interests of Slavery; by its omission to guarantee freedom in free Territories; by its imposition of unconstitutional limitations on the power of Congress and the People to admit new States; by its provisions for the assumption of Five Millions of the State Debt of Texas and for the payment of equal millions and the cession of large Territories to the same State, under menace, as an inducement to the relinquishment of a groundless claim; and by its invasion of the sovereignty of the States and the Liberties of the People, by the enactment of an unconstitutional and indefensible law for the recovery of Fugitives from service, is proved to be inconsistent with all the principles and maxims of Democracy, and wholly inadequate to the settlement of the questions of which it is claimed to be an adjustment.

5. *Resolved*, That the general principles which must govern any real and permanent adjustment of the Slavery Question, were well stated by the Democratic Convention of Ohio, on the 8th of January 1848, which declared that, while "the Democracy of Ohio fully recognize the doctrine that to each state belongs the right to adopt its own municipal laws; to regulate its own internal affairs; and to hold and maintan equal sovereignty with every other state; upon which rights the National Legislature can neither Legislate nor encroach," they "look upon the institution of slavery, in any part of the Union, as an evil, and unfavorable to the full developement and practical benefits of free institutions; and, entertaining these sentiments, feel it to be their duty to use all power, clearly given by the terms of the National Compact, to prevent its increase and to mitigate and finally eradicate the evil."

6. *Resolved*, That the principles indicated by these resolutions—upon which alone, in the judgment of this convention, the question of slavery can be finally and permanently adjusted—are these: 1. Abstinence from all interference with the internal legislation of any state, whether upon the subject of Slavery, or any other municipal concern: and 2. The disconnection of the National Government from all support of Slavery, and the exercise of its legitimate influence on the side of freedom.

7. *Resolved*, That the present Federal National Whig administration has by its acts forfeited all claim to the respect and confidence of the American People, and that we will not hold any political fellowship with any of its supporters or abetters, let them be called by whatever party name they may. The times demand an energetic and faithful support of the men and measures of the Jeffersonian Democracy.

8. *Resolved*, In the language of Gov. Wood's late Inaugural Message, that "the law commonly called the Fugitive Slave law, that denies a jury trial here or elsewhere; that provides for the appointment of swarms of petty officers to execute it: that gives a double compensation to find every claim set up in favor of the master, and pays the expense in any case from the public treasury, can never receive the voluntary co-operation of the people," and ought to be immediately repealed.

9. *Resolved*, That the public lands are the estate of the People, held by the government in trust, not for revenue but for partition, and that the true object of the trust will be best attained by their free grant in limited quantities to actual settlers, not having other lands, without cost.

10. *Resolved*, That Free Trade is the true policy of all nations, to which all nations must ultimately return; but, while the revenues of the country are mainly derived, as now, from imposts, every interest should be equal in the regard of government, in respect to burdens imposed.

11. *Resolved*, That while we insist on rigid economy in public expenditure, and a strict observance of the principles of the Constitution, as to the objects of such expenditure, we are opposed to all invidious discriminations between the different sections of our country, and demand for the commerce and navigation of the West, the same regard which has been hitherto and is now bestowed upon the commerce and navigation of the East.

12. *Resolved*, That the new Constitution, though not in all respects such as we would wish, is yet, in the judgment of the convention, far better, and far more democratic and favorable to progress, than the old, and we, therefore, urge every earnest democrat, and every friend of progress, of whatever party denomination, to give it a hearty and earnest support.

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